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574 D. (to me): Twenty-five.
I (to Nadir Beg): *Bist o panj.*
NADIR BEG (to Adjutant): *Zhigima-besh.*
ADJUTANT (to Amban) Twenty-five (whatever it is in Chinese!)

Next question, by the same route, from the Amban: "How is it that whereas, owing to the intense cold of this barbarous country, we and our subjects wear quantities of clothes right up to the chin, the Tai-tai wears nothing but a skirt and a closely-fitting garment cut low at the neck?" Sensation on arrival of this question! After some deliberation we concoct a suitable reply, to the effect that the country from which the Tai-tai comes, Scotland, is intensely cold, far colder than the Chinese Pamirs, and that this country seems quite hot to her—hence the scantiness of her attire!

After tea D. visited the wives of the O.C. Garrison and the Adjutant. She told me afterwards that both were Tajiks and the Adjutant's wife very pretty. After the visit at their house the ladies came back with D. to her room, and D. had to show them her dresses and keep them amused till a quarter past eight, when they finally departed.

484 563 The last lap of our long trek, from Tashqurghan to Kashgar by the Chichiklik route, was in many ways the most interesting of all. We slept each night in Kirghiz tents which had been collected for us by the Beg of the neighbourhood; this was arranged each day, in the Tashqurghan district, by an excellent Tajik orderly or *yayieh* sent with us by the Magistrate of Tashqurghan. Our transport was similarly arranged, ponies, yaks, camels or donkeys according to what was available. As soon as we entered the Yangi Hissar district an orderly from the Amban of that place met us and performed similar services. A tower of strength to the party was Nadir Beg, already mentioned as having met us at the Mintaka, who looked after us in a most fatherly manner and to whom we took a great liking. A tall, handsome, black-bearded, cheerful, energetic man of about forty, a good horseman and hard as nails, Nadir is a splendid specimen of the Tajik race; he is particularly useful on the march in Sariqol, for he seems to have known every one of the people, Tajiks and Kirghiz alike, from their childhood up. He also has a strong sense of humour. ● 522 I shall never forget the glee with which he told us what his small son had said to him on seeing Gerard Price wearing an oiled-silk waterproof cover over his sun-helmet. "Daddy,"

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said the little boy, " why does the Sahib wear a lamb's tummy on his head ? " The problem of supplies was not so difficult as we had expected. Milk, cream and butter were always to be had from the Kirghiz, but we only once or twice got eggs and never a chicken. At the shop of the one Hindu *bunnia* at Tashqurghan D. was able to replenish her store of flour, oil, dried fruits, walnuts and matches for the onward journey.

On 9th July we left Tashqurghan in state, our caravan now consisting of 17 ponies and one donkey. The Amban made amends for having ignored our arrival by arranging an elaborate *chah-jan* or farewell tea-drinking, combined with a parade of the entire garrison of Tashqurghan. This took place by the road-side about a mile from the bazaar. In the three-walled mud hut used for these ceremonies D. and I sat on the edge of a platform on each side of a wooden tray containing a china bowl of green tea for each of us, and two or three saucers of currants, almonds and strange Chinese confectionery tasting mostly of dust. On one side of the interior of the " reception-pavilion " sat the Amban and O.C. Tashqurghan, on the other G. and our Aqsaqal, while the Turki-speaking interpreter, standing, did his best with the Aqsaqal to keep the very sticky conversational ball rolling between us and the Chinese. The parade consisted of about thirty men and four enormous red banners ; the drill was most successful, until an unexpected evolution had to be performed in connexion with the photograph I took of the army, which caused the O.C. to march and counter-march his troops over half the area under his command before he finally got them to face the camera. Farewells and much hand-shaking completed the proceedings. It may be mentioned here that when a Chinaman shakes hands, he shakes his own hand, the other person doing the same opposite him, both parties bowing deeply the while.

Escaped at last from ceremonial, we revelled once more in an exhilarating canter over the grassy pamir ; past Tiznaf and Chashman, groups of tiny farmsteads, each with its willow-clump, standing amid wide fields of corn and rich pasture ; past bend after bend of the river, running clear as crystal through the meadows with many a fine pool, a possible trout-stream wickedly wasted in unstocked emptiness.

Leaving the Sariqol valley ten miles north of Tashqurghan we mounted steadily for five hours and camped at 12,300 feet in the narrow Darshart ravine. Next day we crossed the